

ENGL 4243 and 6243: Studies in British Literature
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Romance: A Journey Through Time

Genres are notoriously difficult to pin down and romance is no exception. From its origins in wanderings and quests, to its contested relationship with the origin of the novel, to its present-day association with bodice-rippers and the like, romance has seen many incarnations over time. In this course, we will privilege romance's underlying sense of *a fantastical story of travel and adventure*. Drawn from a time span encompassing more than 800 years, readings include the twelfth-century *lais* of Marie de France; the thirteenth-century *Roman de Silence*; a fourteenth-century retelling of the Orpheus legend, *Sir Orfeo*; Sir Thomas Malory's fifteenth-century *Le Morte d'Arthur*; William Shakespeare's early seventeenth-century *The Tempest*; from the eighteenth century, Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina: or, Love in a Maze* and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*; from the nineteenth century, Edwin Abbott Abbott's *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*, and H. G. Wells's *The Invisible Man: A Grotesque Romance*; and from the twentieth century, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit: or, There and Back Again*. So, we will encounter knights and ladies, werewolves, cross-dressers, fairies, white magic, and geometric figures, among other interesting characters. In the process, we will consider the role of *love*, the use of poetic or novelistic *forms*, vernacular *language*, and the prevalence of the *fantastical* or *wondrous*.

Course requirements for 4243 will include weekly response papers, a close-reading presentation, a close-reading paper, and a researched paper or project; for 6243 a researched presentation, close-reading paper, book summary and critique, and researched paper or project.